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SERMON

Preach'd to the

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Parish-Clerks,

At St. ALBAN'S *Woodstreet,*
NOVEMBER 17.

At St. GILES'S in the *Fields,*
NOVEMBER 22, 1712.

A N D

Now Publish'd at the Desire of the
H E A R E R S.

By LUKE MILBOURNE,
A Presbyter of the Church of England.

L O N D O N;

Printed and Sold by J. Downing in Bartho-
lomew Close near West-Smithfield, 1713.

RECEIVED

OF THE

COMMISSION

FOR THE

REDEMPTION

OF SLAVES

IN THE

WEST INDIES

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T O
The Worthy and Justly Esteem'd
GENTLEMEN
OF THE
SOCIETY
FOR
Promoting Christian Knowledge
In and about
The CITY of LONDON.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Sermon here put under your
Protection, was preach'd *Novem-*
ber the 17th, 1712. at the Church of
St. Alban Woodstreet, to the Com-
any of Parish-Clerks, an ancient Body,
A 2 and

and still an *inferiour Branch* of the Clergy of the Establish'd Church of *England*, and who therefore, while they keep within the Bounds of their own Office, ought to be supported and encouraged by their *Superiours*. I could not but lay hold on such an Occasion, to recommend *Psalmody*, a great Part of the Business of *Parish-Clerks*, and in which they are Guides to our worshipping Congregations; and what our *Parochial Clergy* ought to promote, and to take particular Care of; that as *Psalmody* is an important Part of *Divine Publick Service*, so it may be perform'd in a pertinent, serious, reverent, and agreeable Manner. Otherwise the Remissness of *the Priest* may make *the Clerk*, for want of Assistance and Favour, do his Office carelessly, and bring that sacred Employment into Disesteem, as some of our *superiour Clergy*, while they *seldom or never* read the *Prayers of the Church* in their own Persons, but leave them to their Curates, whose Salary is oft so mean and scandalous, that Men of Worth will not accept it, render the most heavenly and compleat Devotions in the Christian World, vile and contemptible to *Atheists*, *Schismatics*, and the *undiscerning Part* of the Common People.

When

The Epistle Dedicatory.

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When I preach'd to the *Parish-Clerks*, I told them particular of *their Duty*, with that Plainness, Impartiality, and Authority, which becomes every lawful Ambassador of Jesus Christ: My Business is not to flatter, or let Men alone in their *Miscarriages* or *Mistakes*, I leave that to others. He who would have the Waters of the Sanctuary run clear, must endeavour to cleanse all the Channels through which they pass: The Body to whom I then preach'd, are too wise, and too honest to fancy themselves liable to no Errors: All Politick Bodies are obnoxious to Corruption; yet, it may be, *their* Errors may lie chiefly at the Door of their Masters, (I mean, not *the Parish*, but *the Parish-Priests*,) who, too often, think themselves unconcern'd in that Duty, which yet our *Blessed Master*, and his *Apostles*, sanctify'd by their own Authentick Examples. I, for my part, value *Psalmody* at the highest Rate, and therefore cannot but respect and esteem those Officers, whose proper Work it is to carry it on; and he who wipes off the Dust, concludes the Plate will always appear the brighter.

What I had preach'd to *these*, I was desir'd to preach again at *St. Giles's in the Fields*, on the *Saturday following*. A Reverend Person, who had engag'd to preach

there on that Day, having been taken with a sudden and very dangerous Sickness, to the no small Loss and Disappointment of the Congregation: I could not refuse those who propos'd it to me; but what I had said to the *Parish-Clerks*, being wholly impertinent there, I added something, in lieu of that, with Respect to *Psalmody in general*, as more suitable to that numerous Congregation. What was said at both Places, I here lay before you, not doubting but that, as you would gladly have the *Abuses of Musick* Reform'd, so you wou'd have *Divine Musick*, and *Psalmody in particular*, Promoted and Encouraged: Musick is a heavenly Art, and sure it's Pity it should ever be debauch'd, to alienate any from the Service of their Maker.

As it's your Design to Promote *Christian Knowledge* in and about this great City we cannot doubt but that your *pious Endeavours* here will have a good Influence upon the *Country* at a distance. They have drawn too many Corruptions from hence; Who knows but God may touch their Hearts at last, and make them rather Imitators of the *Virtues*, than the *Vices* of the City? That *Psalmody* is a *Divine Ordinance*, among others, and that

ought

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ought to be carefully encouraged, and reverently perform'd, is what too many, both here and elsewhere, are ignorant of: This Ignorance has expos'd both the Ordinance it self, and the Friends of it, to Contempt, even among some otherwise well-meaning Men; but so the whining, canting, *Ex-tempore* Man; the *dull, impertinent, and affected* Preacher; the *slovenly and irreverent* Dispenser of our Christian Sacraments, render Sacraments, Preaching, and Praying, despicable among the *pretended* Wits, and the *undistinguishing* Multitude.

There lies indeed something of an *Objection* against our *Psalmody*, viz. That the *Version*, commonly us'd, is mean, full of antiquated Words and Phrases, &c. It's true, our Language is so much changed since the Days in which that *Version* was made, that even that of the excellent Sir *Phil. Sidney*, elaborate as it is, would appear yet more uncouth and disagreeable, than that of *Sternhold and Hopkins*, if it were to be us'd now: Yet none can question Sir *Phil. Sidney's Learning*, or *Skill in Poetry*, but one who wants both those Qualifications himself.

That a *New and better Version* should be substituted in the Room of the *Old*, is what every good Man would wish, and that

Uni-

Uniformity might be kept up in Singing of Psalms, as well as in other Parts of Divine Worship; for it looks odly that the Sons of Harmony should be the Fathers of Discord in our publick Service. The providing of such, belongs only to a National Synod, or Convocation: The Old Version was allow'd of by Edward VI. when the Book of Common Prayer was first publish'd. I have somewhere seen a Form of Thanksgiving, on some extraordinary Occasion, in Queen Elizabeth's Days, it may be for the Victory in 88, in which two Stanza's of the Old Version are printed at length, as to be sung by the whole Congregation: And I have by me a Psalm Book of the Year 1582, with that Queen's Arms on the Back of the Title-Page, and printed, *Cum Privilegio Regiæ Majestatis*; and even Dr. Watson intimates, that the Convocation in 61 thought fit to give a tacit Allowance to the Use of it, which, we may suppose, they did rather for the sake of Psalmody, than out of any Fondness of that superannuated Version. But these Circumstances add Weight to that Authority, by which they were us'd; and such a complicated Authority proposing a New Version, made and examin'd by Learned Men, skill'd in the Original Language, in Poetry, and in Musick, or a thorough Correction of the Old, would,

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would, doubtless, be thankfully receiv'd by all the Lovers of Psalmody; and I make no doubt but, if *that which letteth were taken away*, our *present*, or the *next Convocation*, upon your Intercession, GENTLEMEN, would, in due Time, take Care of that Matter.

As you are GENTLEMEN of great Reputation, and engag'd in an *excellent Design*, your personal Joining in this sacred Duty, would have a considerable Influence upon your own Parochial Assemblies: And the *Improvement of Christian Knowledge* must certainly be the *Improvement of Christian Piety and Devotion*; and Psalmody would appear like it self, a Piece of that heavenly Devotion, if those who *kneel at Prayers*, where conveniently they can, and *stand at the Reading Psalms*, which every humble Christian, unless providentially disabled, would be asham'd not to do: If such Persons would but pay so much Honour to God, and so much Respect to a divine Institution, as to *stand too*, when the *Congregation are singing aloud the Praises of their Maker*; Heathens would never believe we were in an *Act of Divine Worship*, should they see us in the *lazy sitting Posture*, when we pretended to it. The *Jews* would scorn us, and the *Primitive Christians*

ans would scarce take us for serious Professors of the same Faith, and Worshipers of the same Jesus with them, were they to look down upon us in that *irreverent* Posture. Our *Choristers* stand up in Cathedrals, when they sing the *Anthem*, and so does every one there present, who has either *Devotion* or *good Manners*: Those who sing before Princes and great Men, on solemn Occasions, do the same; and he who should sit at an Anthem in the *Royal Chappel*, especially the *QUEEN* being present, would be soon turned out of that sacred Place; and shall not we, when we sing Praises to Him, who is *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, in his *Own House*, where He himself is in the midst of every Two or Three, who are lawfully gathered together in his Name; and where *holy Angels* are always observing both our *Behaviour* and *Expressions*; Shall not we, in such a Presence, express more *awful Apprehensions* of his infinite Majesty, than of that of any mortal Prince or Potentate? Reason and good Breeding teach us *Humility* and *Reverence* on such Occasions; but I never heard that *Sitting* was a Posture, which express'd either of those heavenly Graces.

But

But I conclude that the greatest Number of those who do otherwise, have not thought much upon this Matter; And those who should have been *their Monitors*, have been as thoughtless as themselves; by which Means they may indeed be excus'd à *Tanto*, but not à *Toto*. I have often been much edify'd, when I have seen the Congregation of the late *Bishop of St. Asaph*, in *St. Peter's Cornhil*, all unanimously standing up upon the Calling of the *Psalm*: That great Man's *Instruction* and *Example* brought his People, without much Difficulty, to that decent Posture; and the Musick it self carry'd an Air of more divine Grandeur with it, when so performed, than it would otherwise have done: And, no doubt, but if *all others, who have the Care of Souls*, would tread in the Steps of that Learned Man, every worshipping Congregation of the Church of *England* would, in that Point, be either *Reform'd*, or *Inexcusable*. Here I, and every Lover of *Psalmody*, beg your Assistance, the Assistance of all the Reverend Clergy of our Church, and of all such as sincerely desire, that every Thing in our *Publick Assemblies* may be done *Decently*, in *good Order*, and to *Edification*. To this End the following Discourse was first Preach'd, and

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

and is now made Publick at the Desire of
the Hearers, and is Presented to you
by,

GENTLEMEN,

Your Faithful Servant

In our Common Master,

LUKE MILBOURNE.

2 CHRON. XXIX. 30.

Moreover, *Hezekiah the King, and the Princes, commanded the Levites to sing Praises unto the Lord, with the Words of David, and of Asaph the Seer; and they sang Praises with Gladness, and they bowed their Heads and worshipped.*

TH E Words are Part of that History, which leads us to the Revival of the Feast of the Passover, which seems to have been intermitted in *Israel* now for several Years. *Hezekiah*, the pious Son of a wicked Father, being come to the Throne of *Judah*, as the best Mean of procuring a Blessing on his Government, begins it with the *Restoration of Religion*. *Ahaz*, his Father, had filled *Jerusalem* with Idols, and, in Defiance of the true God, had shut up the Gates of his Temple; had, in a Manner, vacated the Offices of the Priests and Levites; and, by a long Disuse of it, had defiled that glorious House, which *Salomon* had built to the Name of God, with Filthiness and Ruines. But so soon as *Hezekiah* reign'd, he restored the Priests, order'd the Levites to sanctify themselves; and then, as he had open'd and repair'd the Gates, he commanded them to cleanse the Body of the Temple. This done, He appoints the Priests to prepare, and kill, and offer the usual Sacrifice to God. He renews the solemn Service and Worship of God there, and then, so soon as the Time would permit, proclaims the Passover. Of all this, we have a just Account in this, and the following Chapter.

Among other Circumstances relating to the Renewal of this sacred Worship, we are told,

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that

that — When the Burnt-Offering, and the Sin-Offering were made for all Israel; then Hezekiah the King, set the Levites in the House of the Lord, with Cymbals, Psalteries, and with Harps: And the Levites stood up with the Instruments of David, and the Priests with the Trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the Burnt-Offering upon the Altar: and when the Burnt-Offering began, the Song of the Lord began also with Trumpets, and with the Instruments ordained by David King of Israel. And all the Congregation worshipped, and the Singers sang, and the Trumpets sounded: and all this continued until the Burnt-Offering was finished. By all which we see, how great an Interest Divine Musick had, at this Time, in the Celebration of God's publick and solemn Service. And when all this Solemnity was over, then the King, and all such as were present with him, bowed themselves, and worshipped. And moreover, as in the Text, Hezekiah the King, and the Princes, commanded the Levites to sing Praises unto the Lord, with the Words of David, and of Asaph the Seer: and they sang Praises with Gladness, and they bow'd their Heads and worshipped. Now the Words of this Text intimate to us, not only the present Action of the King, the Priests, and the People, upon this extraordinary Occasion, but their whole Religious Constitution, or that settled Rule, according to which the Service of God ought at all Times to have been performed. In which too, we see how much Concern the King, and his Princes, or his Nobility, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, and his Ministers of State, had in the Restoration and Settlement of God's publick Worship: How careful they were that it should be decently perform'd, and how ready all those, who were to minister a-

about the Affairs of Religion, were to do their Duties. In discoursing upon which Matters, we may consider,

I. How great a Share singing of Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Hymns, had in the Worship of God among the Jews, and in the Patriarchal Church before them.

II. Who, in the particular Jewish Church, were the principal Managers of this Part of Divine Worship.

III. In what Manner, and by what Rules they performed it: And,

IV. How far the whole is applicable to that Divine Worship, now offered to God in the Christian Church.

I. We are to consider, How great a Share singing of Psalms, Hymns, and spiritual Songs, had in the publick solemn Worship and Service of God among the Jews, and in the Patriarchal Church before them. I mention the Publick Service of God among the Jews more particularly; because we have the fullest Account of that, in the Book of God: But I cannot speak of that, without looking back to an earlier Original, or to the first Patterns of such solemn Worship, which are recorded there, either expressly, or by Intimation. 'Tis not a meer poetical Fancy, but it is a serious Truth, that, "All we know at present of the blessed Angels, or of the Souls of just Men made perfect, and what their Employment is, and ever shall be, is only that they sing incessant Praises to their Maker and Redeemer, and live in perpetual Love and Charity with one another." This Employment of the holy Angels is of the first Antiquity, when, upon God's laying the Foundations of the

Earth, the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy, Job XXXVIII. 7. as God himself expresses it. And this was not for that Time only, but the Prophet *Isaiah* in his Vision, *Isa.* VI. 3. saw them still engaged in the same Work, where the glorious Seraphim — Cry'd, or sung aloud to one another, in the Presence of their Lord, — *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is filled with his Glory.* And that this will be the Business of all Eternally happy Spirits, is fairly shadowed out to us by *St. John, Revel.* IV. 8, 10. where, under the Representation of *Four Beasts*, the *Four Evangelists*; and under that of *Four and Twenty Elders*, the *Prophets of the old Testament*, are describ'd doing Honour to Him who sat upon the Throne; the Beasts — saying, or singing incessantly Day and Night, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.* And the Four and Twenty Elders singing as a Chorus to them, — *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for Thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created.* Now all this Musick was sacred; all these Expressions of Joy and Thanksgiving were highly due to Him, to whom they were paid: And since singing Hymns of Praise to God, is of so unquestionable Antiquity, it's a plain Proof that God looks upon the Capacity of singing Praise to himself, as a Gift of his own, most sensible to all the rational World; and that neither Men nor Angels can ever praise their Maker in a more acceptable Manner, than when each, in their Way, make a joyful Noise unto God; when they sing to the Honour of his Name, and make his Praise to be glorious.

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We cannot with any Reason doubt but that, as God appointed, and their own original Nature directed the Hosts of blessed Angels to sing unceasing Praises to himself, on Account of both his Goodness and his Power in *creating* them at first, and then *preserving* them from the Rebellion of their Brethren; and upon Account of all his wondrous Acts of sovereign Power, in forming the Universe out of nothing, and protecting it when formed in all its Parts; we cannot doubt after this, but that, so soon as he had *made Man*, he laid the same Duty upon him, and inspir'd him with Abilities to perform it: And he who had so extensive a Government conferr'd upon him at the very first, and had Wisdom enough given him to manage it, (for God never puts Power into the Hands of Fools, but with a Design to punish them, or their Subjects) when he looked about him, and saw the Beauties of the New-made World, a thousand Effects of immense Power and Goodness, and had *no Notion of Evil*, which might disturb or cloud his Thoughts, when he had this admirable Prospect, he could not but break out into Songs of Praise, and the loudest Thanksgivings to his Maker. And could we but believe that the Observation of the Sabbath was ordained in Paradise, as some imagine, the Inscription put in the Head of the *Ninety second Psalm*, by the *Chaldee Paraphrast*, viz. *A Psalm sung by the first Man in Paradise, at the opening of the Sabbath*, would be a very clear Demonstration, in what Manner, that great Parent of Mankind, began his Course of Life. And, since every Day he spent in that delightful Place, furnished him with new Matter of Praise and Admiration; *his Soul*, which was

then all *innocent, holy, and heavenly*, would express it self agreeably : Nor was the Business of his Government so great, nor dressing the Garden of God so laborious, but that, in the midst of all his Employments, he might — *Give Thanks unto the Lord, and sing Praises unto the Name of the most High*, Psalm XCII. 1.

And though the Consequences of his Fall brought a dismal Damp upon his Spirits, yet that Mercy, by which God exempted him from the Stroke of *immediate Death*, and gave him that comfortable Promise, That *the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head*; the full Meaning and Import of which Promise, *Adam*, whatever the *Socinians*, and their Followers, suggest to the contrary, perfectly understood, That Mercy afforded him again Matter of perpetual Praise, and never-ceasing Thankfulness and Adorations. I don't indeed remember, that Scripture any where tells us expressly of any one of the *Antediluvian Patriarchs*, or of their *immediate Successors*, that they prais'd God, by singing to his Honour, tho' we may suppose they did, upon very good Grounds, as may appear anon : But the *Jews* generally thought they did ; and since we find the Heathens, who had little Knowledge of divine Matters, but what was Traditional ; and who mostly followed the Examples of their Predecessors, always accompanied their Sacrifices with Hymns, in Honour of their Gods ; Whence their *Priests* were generally *Poets* ; and *Poets*, and the *Writers of such Hymns*, were their principal Divines ; since Heathens acted thus, we may presume, that *Enoch, Noah, Melchisedec, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob*, and *Job*, used the same Way of celebrating the Name of *the one true God*. And this Practice

Practice seems to have been usual, in that the Israelites fell upon it so immediately after the Drowning of *Pharaoh*, and his *Egyptians*, and after themselves had passed safely through the Red Sea; — *Then sang Moses, and the Children of Israel, says the Text, this Song unto the Lord, and spake it, saying, — I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the Horse and his Rider hath he thrown into the Sea! The Lord is my Strength, and my Song; and he is become my Salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare him an Habitation; my Father's God, and I will exalt him, Exod. XV. 1, 2.* Where, by the very Expressions of the holy Penman, it's evident, that Singing was the most solemn publick Way of thanking God for his Blessings: And that other Nations making every one their *false Gods* the Subjects of their Songs; *Israel*, in Acknowledgment of him who was *their God*, and the *God of their Fathers*, would make his Name, and his Goodness their Song, in Opposition to the false Devotion of the Heathens. So again, when God brought his People in the Wilderness to the *Well of Beer*, which had been stopped thro' long Neglect before, but was to be opened now again, for the Use of the *Israelites*. — *Then Israel sang this Song; — Spring up, O Well, Sing ye unto it! The Princes digged the Well: The Nobles of the People digged it, by the Direction of the Lawgiver, with their Staves, Numb. XXV. 17, 18.* And that it might at once appear a *Custom of the Gentiles*, and such an one as *Israel* could not be without; they could not forbear singing to their Golden Calf; and *Moses* suspected what they had been about, when, upon *Joshua's* telling him, on Account of that extraordinary Noise they heard from

thence, — *There was a Noise of War in the Camp.* *Moses*, who understood the Matter better, reply'd, -- *It is not the Voice of them who shout for the Mastery, neither is it the Voice of such as cry out for being overcome; but the Noise of those who sing, do I hear, Exod. XXXII. 18.* *Moses* knew that such Singing imply'd some particular Act of Divine Worship, such as us'd to be at the Institution of a Religious Feast, and such as, at other Times, they themselves us'd to the Honour of their own God. To shew at once both the *Excellence* and *Usefulness* of so heavenly a Practice. When his own Death drew near, *Moses* taught *Israel* both their pass'd Mis-carriages, and their future Duties, in that un-parallel'd Song which we have at length, *Deut. XXXI.* And of the same Nature we have that sung by *Deborah* and *Barak*, as a Thanksgiving to God for the Deliverance of *Israel*, by their Hands, from the cruel Tyranny of *Jabin* and *Sisera*, *Judges V.*

Whether there were any Levites appointed particularly for carrying on the Work of *singing Psalms, or Hymns* in the solemn Service of the *Ark and Tabernacle*, during *Israel's* Wandrings in the Wilderness, or while the Tabernacle was in *Shiloh*, the Scriptures have not expressly determined, tho' that is very probable too. But so soon as ever *David* had but design'd to build a more magnificent House to the Name of God, he presently appointed considerable Numbers of that consecrated Tribe to so holy a Work; for whatever might appear suitable to the State of a Church not yet thoroughly settled, as indeed that of *Israel* was not, till their Temple was rais'd; as appears by God's permitting the very Prophets themselves, such as *Samuel*;

nay,

nay, and *David* too, and *Salomon* afterwards, to
sacrifice in High Places, and vouchsafing them
 his Visions, and his Answers there; which
 Practice was wholly condemned as soon as ever
 the Temple was built, dedicated, and furnish-
 ed with all Things necessary for Divine Wor-
 ship: Whatever was agreeable to the State
 of the *Jewish Church* before, yet when that
Settlement was perfectly made, the Church be-
 ing then in a kind of *triumphant State*, all the
 Demonstrations of Cheerfulness and Gratitude
 were to be made to that God, who had brought
 them out of a State of Pupilage, and cloath'd
 his *Israel* with Honour, and had made *Jerusalem*
 the Joy of the whole Earth. Then the proper
Introite into that glorious House at all Times
 was, *O come, let us sing unto the Lord! Let us*
heartily rejoice in the Strength of our Salvation!
Let us come before his Presence with Thanksgiving,
and shew our selves glad in him with Psalms. And
then let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before
the Lord our Maker, Psal. XCV. 1, 2, 6.

And now we find *Singing of Psalms and Hymns*
 to God, incorporated into the Temple Service, and
 look'd upon as so necessary a Part of it, that a
 great Number of the *Levites* were employed in
 it; that their particular Courses were ap-
 pointed, and a peculiar Portion allotted them for
 their comfortable, nay, and honourable Subsist-
 ence. Psalms and Hymns were compos'd for
 their continual Use, by inspir'd Men; such as
David, who from thence, as well as from his
 admirable Performance, was call'd, — *The sweet*
Psalmist of Israel, — and *Asaph*, and *Heman*,
 and *Ethan*, and *Jeduthun*, and others: And al-
 most the whole Book of *Psalms* is a Collection
 of such *Songs of Praise*, calling every where up-
 on

on all Men; nay, all Creatures whatsoever, in their Way, to sing aloud to their Creator and Protector's Honour: With a great Number of Forms, in and by which pious Souls might effectually excite one another to Thankfulness, and to make the Name of the true God venerable to all the World. It was in this Way of Hymns or Anthems, that *David* prais'd God always, and more particularly, *in the Day when the Lord had delivered him from the Hands of all his Enemies, and from the Hand of Saul, Psal. XVIII.* In this Manner he deplored the Greatness of his Sin, *in the Matter of Urijah, Psal. LI.* In this Manner *Jeboshaphat* glorified God, for the Deliverance of himself, and his People, from the invading *Moabites, Ammonites, and their Confederates, 2 Chron. XX. 26.* And thus *Hezekiah*, when God had given him Health, with an additional Grant of Fifteen Years to his Life, express'd his Gratitude to him in a Psalm, *Isa. XXXVIII. 9.* And so, in mournful Streins, *the Prophet Jeremiah* lamented over the Ruines of *Jerusalem*, and the dreadful Desolations of his dear Native Country, *Lamentat.* And the *Prophet Habbakkuk, Habbak. III.* is the last of this harmonious Company, whose Songs are recorded in the Old Testament. Now the Book of *Psalms* is so compleat a Treasury of *Confessions, Intercessions, Deprecations, Prayers, Praises, Thanksgivings*, and whatever is expected in the most devout and religious Worship, that, in all probability, and, according to the Opinion of the *Jews* themselves, there were very few Prayers but those, made use of in the Publick Service, either of the Synagogue, or the Temple: In singing of *Psalms* they spent their Nights, as well as Days; — Behold, bless, or praise

praise ye the Lord, all ye Servants of the Lord! Ye who by Night stand in the House of the Lord, Psal. CXXXIV. 1. Praise ye the Lord! Praise the Name of the Lord! Praise him, O ye Servants of the Lord! Ye who stand in the House of the Lord, in the Courts of the House of our God! Psalm CXXXV. 1, 2. That this Singing Psalms all Night, was the Practice of the *Essenes*, a Sect among the *Jews*, appears by that admirable Description *Philo* gives of them, in his Discourse of the *Contemplative Life*; That they, and the Generality of the *Jews*, did so on their Festivals, and did well in so doing, is evident from the Practice of our Saviour, who, after his last Supper, sung a Hymn with his Disciples, before he went out with them to the Mount of Olives, Matth. XXVI. 30. And so much may serve for the first Thing propos'd to our Consideration, viz. What Share singing of Hymns had in the *Patriarchal* and *Jewish* publick Worship.

II. We are to consider, *Who were the chief Managers and Performers in this Part of publick Divine Worship.* And here, to shew in what Veneration God would have this Ordinance to be among his People; he, by his Word to his Prophets, consecrated a considerable Number of his own Tribe, the Tribe of *Levi*, to this heavenly Work: He instituted this, as a Mean of Union between *Angels* and *Men*, the *Carnal* and the *Spiritual*, the *Militant* and the *Triumphant Church*, that they might praise the Lord together, and publish his unbounded Goodness and Glory through the World. And since Men were to be join'd in Confort with Angels; as *Moses* compos'd Hymns for the Use of the *Israelites*,

raelites, and *Aaron* regulated the Divine Service; so *Miriam*, a *Prophetess*, and their Sister, was Leader of the sacred Chorus; so was *Deborah*, a *Prophetess* too, and constituted by God himself a Judge in *Israel*, when she and *Barak* not only compos'd, but sung that noble Hymn, *Judges* V. And the *Daughter of Jephthah*, that faithful Judge and Captain of God's People, led up a Company of Virgins, to meet her victorious Father, in the Head of his Troops, singing with instrumental Musick too, and dancing to the Honour of that God, who had happily taught her Father's *Hands to war*, and his *Fingers to fight*. But when *David the King* became a *Nursing Father* to the Church of *Israel*, then he himself was the *great Master of the Chorus*, till such Time as he had regulated those Matters more exactly, as when he and his People brought up the *Ark of God from Kirjeath Jearim*, 1 Chron. XIII. 8. And again, when he brought it up from the *House of Obed Edom*, and fix'd it in *Zion*, 2 Chron. XV. 17. Nor was ever any Age blessed with more compleat *Masters of Musick*, than that which was made happy by the Government of *David* and *Salomon*.

To shew that inspir'd Prince's great Regard to this Divine Musick, (for with that perverted by vain Men to vainer Purposes, neither *David* nor we have any Thing to do) and his Care of the performing of it, we find, He divided them to the Number of *Two Hundred and Fourscore and Eight*, all Masters of Song, and fit to lead and instruct others, into *Twenty Four Courses*; each Course to officiate according to their Lots, in the same Manner as the *Priests* themselves were order'd: And to add yet to the Honour of their Character, the *Priests* them-

themselves were appointed to join with them
 in that sacred Ordinance; and over each Course
 of those Singers one presided, who was extra-
 ordinarily qualified to compose and begin the
 Psalm or Anthem, while the rest join'd in the
 harmonious Consort with all their Might. For
 we don't find any where, that these pious
 Musicians were afraid, or asham'd to have their
 Voices heard; but — *They sung aloud unto God
 their Strength, and made a joyful Noise unto the
 God of Jacob, Psal. LXXXI. 1.* And this they
 did, to shew their Heartiness in the Work; and
 that they desired that all the World, if possible,
 should hear them praise their God. The Orders
 prescribed in the Case by *David* and *Salomon*,
 pious *Jehoshaphat* reviv'd after a long and me-
 lancholick Intermission, and devout *Hezekiah*
 trod in the same Steps: And though the poor
 Captive *Jews* in *Babylon* hung their mournful
 Harps upon the Willows, and could not bring
 their sad Hearts to sing the Songs of *Sion* in a
 strange Land; yet no sooner was their Captivi-
 ty at an End, and they at Liberty to return to
 their own Land, but, tho' their Condition were
 still but mean, their Spirits reviv'd; therefore
 — *When the Builders laid again the Foundations of
 the Temple of the Lord, they set the Priests in their
 Apparel, with Trumpets; and the Levites, and the
 sons of Asaph, with Cymbals to praise the Lord,
 after the Ordinance of David King of Israel: And
 they sang together by Course, in Praises, and in
 giving Thanks to the Lord; because he is Good; and
 his Mercy endureth for ever toward Israel, Ezra
 l. 10, 11.* — For in the Days of *David*, and of
Asaph of Old, there were Chiefs of the Singers,
 and Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving unto the Lord,
Psalm. XLII. 46: The publick Masters then of
 sacred

sacred Song, were all of the Tribe of *Levi*, well governed, well respected, and well provided for.

III. We must consider, in *what Manner*, and by *what Rules*, these divine Musicians performed their Duties: And here we find that they were of such Eminency, that the *Kings of Israel and Judah* thought fit themselves to be their Law-givers and Directors, though not without the additional Authority and Assistance of the *High Priest*; for the *High Priest's Judgment*, in all Cases, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical, was of a great Weight as that of the *Sovereign himself*, and that by God's own Appointment; tho' that Co-ordinacy in Judgment did not make the *High-Priest* co-ordinate with him in the *Sovereignty*: So that tho' the Prince could not vacate the *publick Determinations* of the *High-Priest*, yet he might lawfully treat him as a Subject, and either banish him, or put him to Death, if he were a State Criminal. Neither did the *Princes of the House of David* disdain to consult with their *Seers*, Men favoured with *divine Inspiration*, and a kind of *Household Chaplains* to the Princes, or their *private Confessors*, to whom the greatest Monarchs laid open their spiritual Conditions, and on whose Counsel in spiritual Matters they generally depended; whence *Gad*, and *Nathan*, and *Iddo*, and others, were particularly consulted in settling the *singing Levites* in the Order, in which *David*, and *Jehoshaphat*, and *Hezekiah*, and other Princes, maintain'd them. But the Levites and the Priests, in Consequence with them, not only lifted up their *Voices* praising God, but they made use of *several Instruments of Musick*, the better to assist and enliven the

their Voices in *Divine Service*. We are told
 that *Jubal*, of the Race of *Cain*, was the *Father*,
 or the first of them, who handled the *Harp* and the
Organ, Genes. IV. 21. The one a *string'd*, the other
 a *wind Instrument*, each the Principal in its kind;
 and from which, and with a Design of imitating
 the *humane Voice* the more easily, all other Instru-
 ments have taken their Original. Now, though
Cain himself was a wicked Wretch, a cruel and
 unnatural Murderer of his innocent Brother, and
 that because his Brother's Works were good, and his
 own were evil, John III. 12. yet it follows not that
Cain's Posterity should all be as wicked as their
 Father. *Adam* was still living, and to be sure
 so exemplary a Penitent, that all such of his
 Descendants as lived within reach of him, and
 who had observed that Misery, which *curst*
Cain had brought upon his own Head, could not
 but have some Desires to *reconcile themselves to*
their Maker. Sin and Misery encreasing every
 Day, had made many sad Hearts, and languishing
 Spirits, which *Adam*, not so much depriv'd of his
 original *Sagacity*, as his unhappy Successors endea-
 vour'd to revive; and so by the Instigation of
 Heaven, and the concurring Influence of the
 Holy Spirit, he stirred up this *Jubal* to frame
 such *Instruments of Musick*, by the Concert of
 which, with their *natural Voices*, they might dis-
 sert prevailing Melancholy, quicken the faint-
 ing Spirits of such as mourned under the Burthen
 of sin, and might render them more cheerful
 in the Service of their God. And here we may
 observe the Difference between what has been
 invented of later Years, and what proceeded
 from *immediate Inspirations*. Our Moderns have,
 from *mean Beginnings*, made *gradual Improvements*,
 and those often slow enough; *Jubal* began with
 the

the noblest Instruments of all, which, he having such Instructors, was no Wonder at all: The following Ages, till such Men as *Moses*, and *David*, and his Contemporaries, were reinspir'd, as *Jubal* had been, had declined very much in their musical Skill; which made *David* set himself, not only to revive the Art, but to *invent* more Instruments, as Helps to the Voice, and which might render *Divine Harmony* yet more grateful to curious Ears, and might affect the Passions several Ways, and give them a sweet, and every way charming Employment, in Meditations heavenly as their Musick.

These Instruments, however aped or abused afterwards, were design'd originally only for praising God, and cheering the Hearts of otherwise drooping Sinners. They were employ'd altogether in the Worship of the Supreme Being; and were so far from displeasing him, that his Prophets made it their great Business to promote *Psalmody*: They found the wonderful Effects of that Angelick Melody; how it compos'd the Mind, and made it fit to receive Divine Impressions. So when *David* play'd on his Harp, and sung to it, probably one of his own Psalms, the evil Spirit departed from Saul, 1 Sam. XVIII. 25. and all the Tumults of his fermenting Spirits were, for that Time, happily allay'd; so when the Sight of *Jehoram*, that idolatrous King of Israel, in the Company of *Jehoshaphat*, King of Judah, and the King of Edom, their Confederate, had extremely ruffled *Elijah's* Spirit, he call'd presently for a Musician, and, when he play'd, the Prophet's Mind resettled, and then the Hand of the Lord came upon him, 2 Kings III. 15. And the Use of the Instruments in Divine Service was not Legal, & Typical only; for we find that *Miriam* used the

before the Law was given; and it was not the Fancy of *one Man* only to use *Instrumental Musick* in God's Worship, but — *Hezekiah set the Levites in the House of the Lord with Cymbals, with Psalteries, and with Harps, according to the Commandment of David, of Gad the King's Seer, and Nathan the Prophet; for so was the Commandment of God by his Prophets, 2 Chron. XXIX. 25. And the Children of Israel kept the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem, with great Gladness, and with great Acceptance from God; and the Levites and the Priests prais'd the Lord Day by Day, singing with loud Instruments unto the Lord, 2 Chron. XXX. 21. Thus Hezekiah, that excellent Monarch, and the Princes, the first and chief of which was the High-Priest, commanded the Priests and Levites to do; and, that there might be no Ground of Suspicion, that this Practice was to expire with the Law of Moses, St. John, Revel. XIV. 2, 3. has represented the Church triumphant in Heaven praising God, so as Their Voices were like the Voice of many Waters, and the Voice of a great Thunder; and he heard the Voice of Harpers harping with their Harps, and they sang as it were a New-Song, and no Man could learn that Song, but the Hundred Forty Four Thousand, a glorious Chorus indeed, who were redeemed from the Earth.*

With these Instruments then the singing Levites, and the Priests sang Praises to the Lord with Gladness, and when they did so, they bow'd their Heads, and worshipped; they sang to God with Fear and Reverence indeed; they did not sit and praise God, as the uninstructed, or indevout Crew do now a-days; but we find them, and all humble Worshipers of the Divine Majesty, always standing up; whether they were Kings, or Princes, or Priests, or Levites, they always stood

up to praise him in his own House : And for any to sit in that holy Ordinance, was what the Christian World never saw for many Ages in their publick Congregations ; the *Jews*, the *Christians*, when they sang to God in Publick, did it still in a *Posture of Adoration*, so the blessed Angels do, and so Men of holy and humble Hearts ought to do ; so, of old, they bow'd and worshipped. And though some *Greek* Heathens might worship the *Works of their own Hands* sitting, the great, the true, the holy God, merits and expects more Reverence at our Hands. And since those *Psalms* and *Hymns* made use of in the Temple, and in the Church, consist of *Prayers*, and *Supplications*, and *Intercessions*, and *Confessions*, all intermingled with their *Praises*, what devout or humble Soul can presume to pray to God for Mercies, to confess his Sins to him, to intercede with him, or to give him Thanks for Blessings bestowed upon himself, or others, in such a rude and unmannerly Posture, as sets him upon the Level with his Maker ? Or who, expecting to be heard when he prays, would not express the *Desires of his Heart* by the *Gesture of his Body*, and kneel, or bow, or stand in the Presence and in the Praises of his God ? Ignorance may be some Excuse in the Case, but those who know their Duty, can never be happy but in doing it.

IV. We come now in the last Place to consider How far what has been said is applicable to that Divine Worship which we offer to God in the Christian Church. And here we are in the first Place to assure our selves, that whatever the *Patriarchs* took up by immediate Direction from Heaven and what God himself taught the *Israelites* to do as decent, and instructive in their publick Wor-

ship

ship, and what *blessed Saints and Angels* are always employ'd in in Heaven, that can never be vacated by that Religion, which was instituted by him, who best knew what would please *his and our Father*; and who himself once bore a part in singing *Hymns* to him, which he would never have done, when his *Soul began to be exceeding sorrowful even unto Death*, if the same Exercise had not been always comfortable to pious Souls, and decent and acceptable in all solemn Approaches to God. The God of *Adam, Sheth, and Noah*; the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; the God of *Israel* according to the *Flesh*, and the God of *Israel* according to the *Spirit*, was *One and the same God*, the same supreme Being; and what was pleasing to him before the Law, and under the Law, could never be displeasing to him under the Gospel. And since a Chorus of joyful Angels welcomed the Nativity of the blessed Jesus, with heavenly Harmony, and with as heavenly Words; — *Glory be to God on High, on Earth Peace, good Will toward Men*, Luke II. 14. Since the *blessed Virgin* celebrated the Goodness of God to her, in making her *the Mother of her Lord*; *Zecharias*, that sacred Honour conferr'd upon his Son, in his being made *the Prophet of the Highest*, and the Person sent to *prepare his Way before him*; and *Simeon*, when he had the glorious Infant in his Arms, as having with *his own Eyes scen God's Salvation*, all in Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving; since these Things were so, Who can imagine, that either *Vocal* or *Instrumental Musick* should ever be banished out of Christian Assemblies?

We do not find any *Command* either in the *Gospels* or *Apostolical Epistles*, that *Christian Congregations* should worship God by singing *Psalms*; but we find the *Disciples* joining with their Master in *One*; and *St. Paul*, reproving some Disorders in the *Corinthian Worshipping-Assemblies*, speaks of — *Every one having a Psalm*, 1 Cor. XIV. 26. i. e. either having compos'd some pious Hymn for publick Use, which they offer'd unseasonably; or, being as *Clerks in the Congregation*, ready, out of Time, to lead that Tune which the rest were to follow; in exercising either of which Faculties, he required that they should act more orderly, and to Edification: And the *Apostle* declares that, on such Occasions, — *He would sing with the Spirit*, i. e. according to the immediate Dictates of the Spirit, who then frequently inspired those Guides of the Church; — *And I will sing with the Understanding also*, and so prove effectually that — *The Spirit of the true Prophet is always subject to that Prophet*. It was one Reason among others, why some Learned Men have fancy'd *Philo's Therapeutæ*, or *Essenes*, were really *Christians*, because they had their nocturnal Meetings for singing of Praises to God, as the Christians had; and that because in Times of Persecution they could not meet for that Purpose in the Day-time, without exposing themselves needlessly to their cruel Enemies. But their singing *Psalms* was so stated a Piece of their Divine Service, that the Heathens could not but take Notice of it; whence *Pliny* informs the *Emperour Trajan*, That the *Christians*, in his Time, us'd to meet together, among other Things, to sing Hymns before it was Light to Christ as God. And the Author of *Philostratus*, among *Lucian's Works*, and as antient as he, reflects upon the *Chri-*

Christians, as watching all Night to sing their sacred Hymns or Psalms: And Ammianus Marcellinus, one of Julian the Apostate's Military Officers, gives the same Account of them afterward. So that if the *Matter of Fact* could yet be doubted of, the Testimonies of *Justin Martyr* in that miscall'd his *Second Apology*, in his *Epistle to Zenas*, and in the Beginning of his *Conference with Trypho the Jew*; of *Clemens of Alexandria*, *Origen*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Minutius Felix*, *Arnobius*, and others, would put an End to the Dispute, and are too many for me at present to take Notice of. We may then be satisfy'd, that *Psalmody* was a constant Part of their Publick Service in the primitive Christian Church. As for its private Use, we find *Paul* and *Silas* singing Psalms in Prison, and that so powerfully, as to break open the Prison Doors, to loose their Fetters, and to bring their before unmerciful Gaoler to Faith and Repentance. *St. Paul* exhorts his *Ephesians*, Eph. V. 19. to speak to, or among one another, in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing and making Melody in their Hearts to the Lord. — So again he persuades the *Colossians*, Col. III. 16. That the Word of God might dwell in them richly, with all Wisdom; and that they should teach and admonish one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing with Grace to God in their Hearts. And *St. James*, Jam. III. 15. advises in short, If any be merry, let him sing Psalms. Thus, to speak with the Author of the *Wisdom of Salomon*, Wisd. XVIII. 9. in Times of Danger, — The righteous Children of good Men did sacrifice secretly; and with one Consent made a holy Law, That the Saints should be alike Partakers of Good and Evil, the Fathers now singing out their Songs of Praise.

But here, because some *sullen way-ward Persons*, who yet call themselves *Christians*, are mighty Enemies to the Use of *Instrumental Musick* in Churches, we may briefly enquire, *Whether the Use of such Musick be Lawful, or of any considerable Antiquity in the Christian Church, or not?* That it was always agreeable to God's Will in the *Patriarchal* and *Mosaick Age*, and therefore *Good in it self*, I have demonstrated already. How it should come to *lose its Nature under the Gospel*, will be very hard for any Man living to shew. The Spirits of sinning Christians, as such, might be as despondent as theirs before them; their Sorrows, and their Joys and Gratitude might be as signal; why then should it be offensive to make use of the same Means to express their Thankfulness, to allay their Sorrows, or to cheer their Spirits in the Worship of God, as Saints and pious Men of old did? *If singing Praises to God with tunable Voices*, be heavenly Musick, as indeed it is, will the Addition of *Instruments to Voices* any way pall the Harmony? Do *Organs*, well play'd on, make the Musick of the worshipping Congregation the more disagreeable? We'll grant that, during the Times of Persecution, the Church might be content with *vocal Musick* only, as less invidious, and less design'd for Pomp and Grandeur; they would only have expos'd themselves as a Prey to their Enemies by such expensive Consorts: But when those Storms were once blown over, it was not fit the *Christian Church*, in a flourishing and peaceful State, should be more Melancholick, or any Way inferiour to the *Temple*, or the *Synagogue*: That *David's Psalms* were sung in the Church, is sufficiently proved; but if a Psalm be well defined by *Gregory Nyssen*; a Regulation

gulation of the Voice by a musical Instrument ; or by St. Basil, a musical Way of speaking to an Organ well play'd on, according to the Rules of Harmony ; though we take a Psalm there in a general Sense, yet that will take in the Ecclesiastical too, and will, without ascribing the Invention to any Bishop of Rome, prove that Instrumental Musick entered very early into the Church. And though, as the Author of the Questions to the Orthodox among Justin Martyr's Works, insinuates ; Plain Song, without Instruments, was used in the Church of old, because of the Unskilfulness of many Christians in Psalmody ; yet that Art arising to greater Perfection afterward, that Reason ceasing, the Practice gradually came to an End too in the greater Churches ; where, that Psalmody might be carry'd on without Discord or Indecency, Singers were made one of the inferiour Orders in the Church, and not incapable, as such, of rising to a higher Degree. As for their Ordination, it might be perform'd by a meer Presbyter ; the Form of it was in these Words ; — See that thou believe in thy Heart what thou singest with thy Mouth, and approve in thy Works what thou believest in thy Heart.

*Vid. Bingham's Antiquities of the Christ. Ch.
l. 3. c. 7.
Bona Cardin.
de Psalmos.*

The Church of Rome has found its Account in keeping up this Order still ; and the Charms of their Vocal and Instrumental Musick in their Churches are so bewitching, that, for their sakes, Men of Apprehensions otherwise sharp enough, can overlook all their other monstrous Errors. How that Order came to be laid aside in many of the Reform'd Churches, since their Reformation was carry'd on in most Places in a very tumult-

multuous and disorderly Manner, we need not wonder. But in this Nation, where Matters were managed with more Calmness, and by better Authority, most of our *Cathedral* and *Collegiate Churches* had their *Divine Service*, their *Psalms* in *Prose*, and their *Anthems* sung still by their *Canons*, *petit Canons*, and other *Lay-Choristers*, both *Men and Boys*, the *Bishops*, *Deans*, and *Prebendaries*, if able, joining with them; where, when they are well order'd by their Superiours, Men of *sincere Piety and elevated Devotion* may have their very Souls ravish'd with that *celestial Harmony* they meet with there. And however deficient some *Foreign Churches* may be in this particular, yet it must be confess'd to their Honour, that both the *High and Low Dutch*, and *French*, have taken more Care of their *ordinary Psalmody* than we have done. Among them you may hear crouded Congregations *singing* really with all *their Might*, and *singing skilfully too with a loud Noise*, without one discordant Voice in the whole Consort. Among them we may hear *little Children* in their Schools, whither they are sent very early, such as can scarce speak plain, yet singing *Psalms* under the Direction of their School-Mistress; and *well-grown Lads* under that of their School-Masters; by which they are all fitted to sing *Psalms* to their Organs, on *Sundays* especially, with so *agreeable an Harmony*, as cannot but take much with those, who come thither with a Design to do Honour to their Maker. And I have been inform'd, that in most of our *Free-Schools* there were Salaries originally settled, not only for *Writing and Grammar Masters*, but for *Masters of Musick* too, to instruct young *Scholars* in the *Art of Singing*; by which they learnt to *speak well*, with an agreeable Accent, and

and a good Command of their Voices, and to plead handsomely at the Bar, and to speak with a good Grace and a due Pathos from the Pulpit, when they happen'd to be call'd to those Employments in their maturer Years; and they were by that Care, well prepar'd to sing his Praises, whose Providence had allotted them so happy an Education, in the publick Assemblies of the Church. And I find *Queen Elizabeth*, in her *Injunctions*, taking Notice that,

— 'In some Parish-Churches here- *Injunct. 49.*
' tofore, there had been Livings ap-
' pointed for the Maintenance of Men and Chil-
' dren, to use singing in the Church; by means
' of which, the laudable Service of Musick had
' been had in Estimation, and preserved in
' Knowledge. The *Alienation of which Livings*,
she then piously endeavour'd to prevent; and
perhaps if due Enquiry were made after *Lands*
given in this Kingdom, to such truly Charitable
Uses, many sacrilegious Embezlements might
be discovered, and the Revenues happily re-
turned to their original Purposes.

Psalmody, and that in Parish-Churches especially, has been by some *very Learned Men*, but for *very insufficient Reasons*, much discouraged among us; and when all Manner of Musick beside has been so much improv'd, when our *Cathedrals, and Royal, and College-Chappels* have been wonderfully advanced both in *Vocal and Instrumental Harmony*, *Parochial Musick* has been so slighted in many Places, that the *Clerks* could scarce pretend to sing to the *Praise and Glory of God*, when so very few were able, or willing, to join in Confort with them. Some *travelling Teachers* indeed of late Years have brought young Men in some Country Parishes to sing tolerably.

lerably. The Psalm-Tunes, though antient, are not so contemptible Pieces of Musick, as some would represent them; but our *Gentlemen and great Men* are generally above such *humble Dispersations*, and the *Musick of the Theatre* is more grateful to their Ears, where all the looser Passions are indulged, than that of an *Assembly of Christian People*, in grave Tunes praising the Lord for his Goodness, and declaring the Wonders he does for the Children of Men; and many are willing to gratify an Eunuch singing in an Opera, in a much more liberal Manner than a Teacher of Psalmody, (though they too meet with noble Encouragement from *such whose Hearts God has touch'd*) for instructing Children, otherwise lost in Ignorance and Vice, in the Principles of Religion, Psalmody, and other necessary Learning. And, instead of helping to mend our Parish-Musick, such *Gentlemen* are apt to please themselves with the Blunders of the Performers, and to despise and laugh at the whole Ordinance for their Mistakes. Yet certainly, if the *Musick of the Church* be compared with *that of the Theatre*, the Advantage must lie wholly on the Side of the former. No Heart can be so warm'd with *sacred Enthusiasm* by any *Solo or Sonata*, as by a pious *Hymn or Anthem* well compos'd, and well perform'd, or by a *plain Psalm* skilfully sung, with clear and tunable Voices, in a grand Consort in the House of God. The Musick of those light and airy Sonnets may tickle the Ear with Pleasure for a while; the sober Harmony of a Psalm or Anthem affects the Soul, makes lasting Impressions upon the Mind, and inspires the generous Breast with truly great and glorious Thoughts, enflames the Spirits for the noblest Undertakings, such as are the *Works of*

Love

Love, Mercy, Justice, Charity, and every Thing which tends to God's Honour, and his Country and his Neighbour's Welfare. This kind of Harmony would lay the blustering Humours of the cowardly Hector, the malicious Anger of the Man of pretended Honour, the fiery Temper of the seditious Malecontent, the brutish Inclinations of the Slaves of Lust; and pious Words set to a lively and majestick Tune, with the Concert of good Voices and Instruments, would give the witty Atheist an Idea of something so truly Divine, as would melt down his otherwise stubborn Heart, into the Acknowledgment of a Deity. But to expatiate in Commendation of that which makes the very Fiends of Hell submit; to lay together the Testimonies of holy Men of old, concerning the Force and Influence of *Psalmody*, would be endless as well as needless. It's that without which the publick Worship of God can never be compleat; which nothing but Extremity of Persecution can silence; and the want of which, in such Circumstances, all the faithful People of God must heartily deplore. It's the Food of humble and devout Souls, the Joy of Angels, the Foretast of Heaven, and the Delight of that God, who is worthy to be prais'd, and accepts of Praises as an Acknowledgment of that Honour due to his holy Name.

Kings then and Princes, Great Men, and the *Judges of the Earth; young Men and Maids, old Men and Children,* ought in this Manner to magnify their great Creator; happy are those whom their blessed Master, when he comes, shall find so doing! Happy are they who can so raise their grovelling Thoughts from Earth, and all its transient Enjoyments! Happy are those who
 lend

Lend their helping Hand to raise the Poor, the
 Destitute, the Orphan, the whole perishing
 Tribe, from the Dunghil, and tune their pleasant
 youthful Voices to *Gratitude to God* above, and to
 their *Benefactors* here below! How acceptable must
 so pious a Profusion be, which spends it self to re-
 scue, otherwise helpless Souls, from Hell, and to
 bring them Home to that Son of God, who laid
 down his own precious Life to redeem the Souls of
 the Poor, and such as are cast out, as well as those
 of the Rich and Great, from the Pains of eter-
 nal Death! If it were a good Evidence of the
 blessed Jesus's being the long expected *Messias*,
 that by and through him the Gospel was preach'd
 to the Poor, it will be an infallible Evidence, that
 those are the sincere Servants of God, and such
 whose Worship he delights in, through whose
 generous Assistance, the Mouths of the Poor
 are fill'd with the Praises of God, and the
 sacred Choir fill'd up with such as otherwise
 might have howl'd in eternal Torments. By
 this Christian Care, we hope, through God's
 Blessing, for a more effectual Reformation of Man-
 ners, than any other Method has yet produced.
 We hope to see God's Worship perform'd more
 exactly every Day, *Psalmody*, even in Country
 Churches, gradually advanced to the highest Per-
 fection, till all Persons of Wealth grow asham'd
 of not putting their helping Hands to the Chri-
 stian Education of the Poor and Ignorant; till
 Men of the highest Quality be asham'd to sit si-
 lent, when all the Congregation, of which they
 are Members, are, with a loud Voice and ear-
 nest Devotion, singing Praises to their Maker;
 till all the meaner sort of Christians shall unani-
 mously tune their Voices to his Honour; and till
 our happily Reformed British Church appear in the

Presence of her Eternal Head, with all the glorious Ornaments of the King of Heaven, and be yet *more glorious within*, and be in every Respect, *fair as the Moon, bright as the Sun, and yet, to all her Enemies, terrible as an Army with Banners.*

And nothing can tend to this desirable End more effectually, at present, than a just Encouragement of *those Officers*, whose Business it is to lead the Psalm in our Parish-Churches. What the Quire are in our Cathedrals, that they are in our Parochial Churches. The *Order of the Singers* in the *primitive Church* were the *Original of these*, as well as of the others; the Name of Clerk signifies their *Relation to the Clergy* still, tho' they are not still *formally ordained*; and that of *Parish Clerk* determines the Places in which they are to exercise their Faculty; and these, as the others had been in the Primitive Church, were first instituted to *regulate and encourage Psalmody, in the publick Assemblies of the Reformation*: and these too, upon their apparent Fitness, may be admitted, on Occasion, to the Office and Order of Deacon or Priest, as of old: Their Business in our Church is to attend on the *Bishop, Priest, or Deacon*, in the Performance of such Offices as belong to their several Orders; to take Care of *such Books* as are in Use in the Church; to *assist at making Collections* on publick Occasions, especially on Sacrament-Days; to have the *Vestments of the officiating Clergy*, and the *Utensils of the Vestuary and the Holy Table* always in Readiness; to give Notice to the *Parish Priest or Curate of the Sick*, or such as desire any private Converse with their *Pastors*, for Satisfaction in Matters of Doubt or Ignorance, and for leading the whole Congregation

in singing of Psalms, and a kind of Directors or Monitors to them, what Tune they are to sing, and in what Key. Whence it's requir'd, " That

" the Clerk of a Parish, who is
Canon 91. " to be chosen, should be of Twen-

" ty Years of Age at least, and
" known to the Parson or Vicar to be of honest
" Conversation, and sufficient for his Reading,
" Writing, and competent Skill in Singing, if it
" may be. And that he may be the more cer-
tainly so qualified, the *Canon* determines that, —

" No Parish Clerk, upon any Vacation, shall be
" chosen within the City of

C. de Aeditius. " London, or elsewhere within

" the Province of *Canterbury*,

" but by the Parson or Vicar; or, where there

" is none, by the Minister of the Place for the

" Time being. This Choice the *Reformation of Ecclesiastical Laws*, compos'd by *Commissioners* in the Time of King *Edward VI.* would have settled in the *Curate and Church-Wardens*; but that proving an abortive Piece, the Law has settled it as before: And how some Parishes have usurp'd upon their Curates, and are always struggling with them for the Choice of their Parish Clerks in this City, and elsewhere, would not perhaps be very hard to find out. As for the *Incorporation of them into a Company*, it's purely a *Civil Privilege*; it adds nothing to their Character, nor alters the Nature of their Employment, tho' some *spiritual Advantages* may be made from that too.

You then, *my Brethren*, are to remember, that you are *Servants* in the Church, not *Masters* not inferiour to the Body of the *Levites* under the old Law, nor equal with the *Priests*: But you are to act in your proper Stations under their

their Guidance, by a due Submission to them ; you are in a good Measure safe from all Temptations to Irregularity, Laziness, or Presumption.

You are, as the Singers were of old, both under the Law and the Gospel, to be *humble, prudent, tractable, diligent* in your Places, and to be *devout, pious, innocent, and exemplary in your Lives and Conversations*. I have known some of those *disaffected to our Church*, and some who *sit very loose to all Religion*, contend with their *Priest*, in hopes to thrust a *lewd incapable Wretch* into the Desk, and so to ease the Parish of a Charge, at the Price of affronting *God and his Ministers*, and throwing Dirt upon all the Duties of Religion. You are to attend upon the *officiating Clergy in all God's solemn publick Ordinances*, and Men of Sense will conclude, that you ought always to be upon your Guard, to be *habitually sober*, and ready to *sing to God with Grace in your Hearts*, and to be always *fit to communicate at God's holy Table* : Your Body is still a *Part of the Clergy*, and your *ill Behaviour* will bring a *Scandal upon the Church*, as well as that of your Superiours : And as our *Ecclesiastical Laws* punish the Vices of the Clergy, when flagrant, by *Suspension, Excommunication, and Deprivation*, as Occasion requires ; so you, as an *Incorporation*, ought to admit none to be Members of your Body, whose Lives and Disabilities make them a Disgrace to you, and to *cast them out*, if they fall into gross Errors and Misdemeanours ; that such as are unfit for *those of the Church*, may have no Interest in your *Civil Privileges*.

The Church has appointed *Psalms for every Day of every Month*, by following her Choice you can never be guilty of any great Absurdity ; but
leaving

leaving out, or putting in, or skipping from Verse to Verse, on Pretence of making the Psalm more pertinent to the Occasion; by which Means the Congregation are at a Loss to find out what they are to sing; or the Inconvenience must be prevented by that unharmonious and undecent way of Reading every Line before it is sung, by which Means the Remedy becomes as bad as the Disease. To do this, or to be wiser than the Church in her Appointments, belongs neither to you, nor to the Parish Priest, but only to the Governours of the Church, and her Representatives conven'd lawfully in a National Synod.

The Choice of Psalms on particular Days, if needful, belongs to the Incumbent: If he leaves it to your Discretion, a modest Discretion would yet consult him, who, as he's the proper Judge of what is fittest to preach; so he's the proper Judge of what is fittest to sing, for the Edification of the People.

The Measures in which the Jewish and Christian Churches sung their Psalms, were not like ours, though the Hebrew Original be sometimes Rhythme, but their Numbers little understood: Our vulgar Prose comes nearest to them, and the noblest Anthems are drawn from thence. But since such Psalmody is above the Attainments of our ordinary Congregations, all the Reform'd Churches sing their Psalms and Hymns in Rhythme, that rendring them more pleasant to the Ear, more easy to the Memory, and allowing them more of Breath at the End of just so many Syllables, than the prosaick Compositions usually do. The Reform'd Churches have always been very shy of Alterations, for fear of disturbing the Minds of well-meaning, but perhaps not over-critical, Christians: Our Church has long used the

the same Way; and as I am satisfied, that Men may sing *Psalms in Rhythme with as quiet and peaceable Minds, as they can sing or say those in Prose*, whatever a *Learned*

Man may have insinuated to Dr. Rich. Watson. the contrary; so I cannot think

our Church did amiss, when she retain'd the *old Prose Version* in her *Daily Service*, notwithstanding the Accuracy of the last Translation in the Body of our Bibles: That *old Translation* has been unanswerably vindicated by the *Learned Dr. Hammond*, and others; and our *best Composers of Church Musick* have so generally chosen that *old Translation* for their Hymns and Anthems, that I cannot, on that Reason, but have a great Regard to our *old Rhythming Version* of the *Psalms*; and must, in my own Judgment, conclude all *Innovations dangerous*, till such Time as a *National Synod* shall lay one more correct before the *Three Estates in Parliament*; which having the *Royal Sanction* added to it, would really oblige all the *good Members of the Church of England*, and be receiv'd, and made use of every where with Thankfulness.

You, my Brethren, are *Masters of our Parochial Musick*, especially where an *Organ* is wanting: And it's your Business and Interest not to confound, but to promote Harmony, and that doubtless is the Aim of every worthy Member of your Society: But to read every Line by one alone, confounds all; it breaks the Sense of every Period; it breaks the Sweetness of every Cadence; it's a Practice therefore admitted of in no well-order'd Church, that of *North-Britain* only excepted, and it was brought first into *England* by them in the Head of those *Rebellious Arms*, which they rais'd against the best of Churches, and

the best of Kings. And certainly it's now Time to be ashamed of such an immusical Contrivance. If this *undecent Practice* were entirely banish'd, all such as could *read*, and desir'd to *sing*, would bring their Books with them; such as could not, would endeavour to get them by Heart: The *primitive Christians* had them all so; very many in the *Foreign Reform'd Churches* have been as industrious, and so would great *Numbers of our own*, if that absurd Custom did not indulge their Laziness.

As you are a *Corporation*, beside your Power to cast out unworthy Members, you have excellent Opportunities, at your *weekly Meetings*, to improve your selves in your Business; and you may settle such Measures among your selves, if you are but true to your own Interests, as may advance Psalmody, in and about this City, to a yet greater Perfection: You'll advance it especially by performing it in *your own Persons*, reverently, devoutly, earnestly, as if you your selves believ'd *Psalmody to be a Divine Ordinance*. The Behaviour of the *Masters of the Musick*, and of the *Masters of the Assemblies*, has usually a good Influence upon the whole Consort. I have often wonder'd to see many of our *Clergy* so very careless in the Matter; It may be many have not consider'd the Matter, and so have indulged themselves in *sitting at the singing*, tho' they have *stood up at the reading Psalms*; for what Reasons, they themselves know best: I am sure they'll find it difficult to shew me either the *Priests or Levites* under the Law, or the *Bishops, Priests, or Deacons, or Singers*, under the Gospel, *sitting* while they sung the Praises of their God; or any devout or humble Christian, *sitting at an Anthem*, in our *Royal Chappels or Cathedrals*. Those
who

who reverence one Ordinance, will behave themselves reverently at all; and Irreverence at one, may have a fatal Influence on Men in all the rest. Singing to God is one part of the Beauty of Holiness; but it's miserably tarnish'd by an indecent Behaviour in his own House.

Finally, Let not any of that Skill in Musick, which God has bless'd any of you with, be ever defiled by mingling with what's profane and irreligious. You too are *God's Ministers*, and tho' it may be of several Professions, yet all peculiarly devoted to his Service; Let therefore nothing that is scandalous or offensive to chaste or modest Ears, ever proceed out of your Mouths: What Communication has Light with Darknes? What Communion has God with Belial? Thus the Levites, thus the Singers were taught of old. Let but these Advices prevail with you, and then you and I, and all the whole Israel of God, when we come in due Time to be translated to the Church triumphant, to the Assembly of the First-Born, we shall there with Angels and Arch-Angels, and all holy glorified Souls, sing eternal Hallelujahs to the Head of the Church, the Son of God, our Saviour and Redeemer.

To Whom, with Thee O Father, and Thee O Holy Ghost, Three Persons, but One Infinite and Eternal G O D, be given, as is most due, all Honour, Glory, Praise, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen. Amen.

F I N I S.

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